

312.2.0.MALT -"If I could say it, I wouldn't have to dance it"

A Philosophical Investigation of Multi-Modality
Bifrost University - May 25th 2010 - Assignment 2

Actors who take part in stage plays in the theatre or musicians who do live performances, often talk about, "this particular hall was good or bad", referring to how the audience responded to the show or concert. So it's fair to say that there is some kind of a relationship going on between the performer and the audience. The purpose of the performance or concert is not only to deliver the music but also giving the musician opportunity to present the music in a manner that the audience can receive something else than just the written music it self.

But let us ask some questions first. Given that we would have the chance to attend to a performance by a world class musician, recorded in the most prestigious way, that would be played back on a first class PA system in a nice concert hall, would it be tempting to go to a "concert" like that? Would we pay the same price for the ticket for this kind of performance as we would if the same pianist were playing in his own flesh? The answer to these questions is most likely no and why the answer is no, that is the million-dollar question.

Let us try to imagine why the idea of listening to a pair of loudspeakers on stage, even if it would translate the music in best way possible, seems to be far less appealing than the experience of seeing and sitting in the same room with the musician in person. We could also imagine a self-playing grand piano, programmed to play the finest piece of music there is, so there should be no acoustical difference from the real one. It would play the most difficult compositions, with out effort or any failures and everybody would be happy. Or would we?

Here, lies the answer, why we prefer the live performance. We do not want the performance to be perfect, the perfect performance could possibly be described with words but then again it would not be great. The greatness of the performance is embedded in the endless ways the artist can introduce with the interpretation of the music. If there would be one perfect way to play certain piece of music, there would be nothing left for the musician to bring a long with

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his playing and nothing for us to receive other than well organized strings of tones we could call music, but nothing more.

For instance let us take a piece of music played by two different musicians in the same way from a technical point of view, in other words they follow the notes in almost the exact manner. Somehow, listening to the first one brings goose bumps to your skin and tears to your eyes but when listening to the other, nothing happens, no tears, nothing! This can be explained with the tiny nuances and differences in the playing, which are almost immeasurable by any technique. Another factor is that an experienced musician can feel the boundaries of his instrument and how it respond to his playing, each particular work in every situation for different group of people. What is also very important is the presence of the person, how does he or she appear on stage when performing.

Talking about effort and failures. Not only do we want the effort, we want the failures to be lurking behind the next corner. We want the musician to take us on a journey where he takes the risk, were we can see and feel through the expression on face of the musician, all the effort, all the conflicts, how he succeeds, the joy and pain in his battle with the music. This is the relationship between the musician and the audience, this is were we as an audience, take part and the performing musician is aware of this participation and if sensing the will of the audience to take this risk with him, to go on this journey, it will encourage him to enforce this relationship.